

February 9, 2021

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Temporary Changes to Requirements of Educator Certification Regulations

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted education in RI in various ways, including educators applying for or renewing their certificates.

On June 16, 2020, action was taken by the Council to grant approval to the Commissioner to make temporary changes to some requirements for educator certification regulations. These changes remained in effect until December 31, 2020. Since most required certification tests have been available since June 2020 (either via the ETS *Praxis* Tests at Home option or the reopening of RI Prometric centers for in-person testing) and courses at RI institutions of higher education and educator preparation programs have been available via in-person, virtual, or hybrid modes of instruction, widespread barriers to educators meeting certification requirements have mostly been resolved.

Though we do not anticipate that many educators need additional flexibilities for their certification requirements, the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education has granted the Commissioner approval to allow for individual flexibilities for educators facing extreme circumstances. These revised temporary changes apply to educators who are either seeking certification in RI, or are renewing certificate(s) expiring in July/August of 2021. Changes will be implemented through the Office of Educator Excellence and Certification Services by way of the application process, and will remain in effect until September 15, 2021. Allowing for these changes ensures that those educators directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and facing extreme circumstances have the means to request individualized flexibilities.

The chart below is a listing of the certificate types and the revised COVID-19 Temporary Changes to Requirements of Educator Certification Regulations.

****Educators impacted by these changes must submit a paper application to the certification office****

Seeking: Certificate Type	Requirement(s) Not Met by Educator	Approved Action
First Issuances		
Full Initial certificate in all areas (except CTE areas)	Unable to take the required test due to an extreme circumstance.	Upon RIDE approval, may apply for a Preliminary Temporary Initial, allowing the educator one year to take and pass RI required tests. Evidence of registration of test required for issuance. <i>This does not impact educators who hold valid certificates in states with expanded Interstate Flexibility.</i>
Full Initial certificate in any CTE area	Has met all CTE program or credential review requirements except for NOCTI. Unable to take the PLT due to an extreme circumstance.	Upon RIDE approval, may apply for the Preliminary Temporary Initial certificate, allowing the educator one year to take and pass NOCTI and the PLT. Evidence of registration of test required for issuance.

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Seeking: Certificate Type	Requirement(s) Not Met by Educator	Approved Action
Preliminary CTE 3 Year certificate	Has met all prerequisite degree and experience requirements, except NOCTI.	May apply for a Preliminary CTE 3 Year certificate, but will be issued as Preliminary Temporary Initial, with an expiration date of July 31, 2022. Upon confirmation of an educator's passing score, RIDE will update the educator's certificate to a CTE 3 Year certificate at no cost to the educator. When the NOCTI has been taken and passed, the candidate's certificate will be converted to the Preliminary CTE 3 Year certificate and extended to the full certificate cycle.
Preliminary Expert Residency certificate	Unable to take the required test due to an extreme circumstance.	Upon RIDE approval, may apply for the Preliminary Expert Residency certificate, allowing the educator one year to take and pass RI required tests. Evidence of registration of test required for issuance.
Reinstatement		
Reinstatement of expired certificate(s) less than 10 years (2012 or later)	Unable to take the required test due to an extreme circumstance.	Upon RIDE approval, may apply for Preliminary Temporary Initial, allowing the educator one year to take and pass RI required tests. Evidence of registration of test required for issuance.
Renewal		
Preliminary CTE 4 Year (renewed from the Preliminary CTE 3 Year)	Has not met coursework requirements due to course not being offered at IHE due to COVID-19.	May renew as a Preliminary CTE 4 Year certificate, with an expiration date of July 31, 2022 with evidence of registration for required coursework (Must provide letter from IHE/EPP stating courses were not available). When the 2021 renewal requirements have been met, the certificate will be extended for the remaining time of the certificate cycle of 4 years.
Preliminary Emergency (First Renewal)	Unable to take the required test due to an extreme circumstance.	With LEA approval, may renew as a Preliminary Emergency certificate, with evidence of registration of content test.
Preliminary Emergency (Second or Third Renewal)	Unable to take the required test due to an extreme circumstance. Has not met coursework requirements due to course not being offered at IHE/EPP due to COVID-19.	With LEA approval, may renew as a Preliminary Emergency certificate, with evidence of registration for content test and/or evidence coursework was not offered (Must provide letter from IHE/EPP stating courses were not available).

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Seeking: Certificate Type	Requirement(s) Not Met by Educator	Approved Action
Preliminary Expert Residency (Second and Subsequent Renewals)	Has not met coursework requirements as outlined in plan of study or approved program due to coursework not being offered at IHE/EPP due to COVID-19.	May renew as a Preliminary Expert Residency allowing educator one year to meet requirements with evidence of that coursework was not offered (Letter from IHE/EPP stating courses were not available).
Preliminary Temporary Initial **specific to certificates expiring July/August 2021**	Unable to take the required test due to an extreme circumstance.	May renew as a Temporary Initial, allowing the educator one year to take and pass RI required tests. Evidence of registration for content test required for issuance.

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